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Note by the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit a letter dated 18 December 2003 from the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the report on the activities of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

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Letter dated 18 December 2003 from the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa addressed to the President of the Security Council

On behalf of the Security Council Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, I have the honour to submit herewith the report on the activities of the Ad Hoc Working Group (see annex).

I would appreciate it if the present letter and its annex could be circulated among the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Ismael A. **Gaspar Martins**
Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group

Annex to the letter dated 18 December 2003 from the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa addressed to the President of the Security Council

Report on the activities of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa

Introduction

The programme of work of the Ad Hoc Working Group, as established by the Angolan chairmanship for the period under review, was based on the following:

(a) Recommendations emanating from the public meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Africa held on 29 January 2002;

(b) Proposals made by the Ad Hoc Working Group under the chairmanship of Mauritius, contained in documents S/2002/979 and S/2002/1352;

(c) The terms of reference for the Ad Hoc Working Group, contained in document S/2002/207.

Mandate

Council members may recall the following mandate entrusted to the Ad Hoc Working Group under the terms of reference contained in document S/2002/207:

(a) To monitor the implementation of recommendations contained in S/PRST/2002/2 and previous presidential statements and resolutions regarding conflict prevention and resolution in Africa;

(b) To propose recommendations on the enhancement of cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as with other United Nations agencies dealing with conflicts;

(c) To examine, in particular, regional and cross-conflict issues that affect the Council's work on African conflict prevention and resolution;

(d) To propose recommendations to the Security Council to enhance cooperation in conflict prevention and resolution between the United Nations and the African Union and subregional organizations.

Main activities carried out by the Ad Hoc Working Group

In conformity with the timetable for action established in April 2003, the activities set out by the Ad Hoc Working Group focused on achieving the following broad objectives:

(a) Enhancing cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council;

(b) Promoting confidence-building in the regions of Africa affected by conflicts;

(c) Enhancing the role of the Security Council in the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa;

(d) Enhancing cooperation with the African Union as well as with subregional organizations in Africa.

Cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council

In the framework of the cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, the Ad Hoc Working Group ensured that the question of Guinea-Bissau was kept under active review on both the agenda of the Working Group and that of the Security Council, in implementation of the recommendations of the Working Group contained in document S/2002/979.

In that connection, the Ad Hoc Working Group enhanced its working relationship and coordination with the Economic and Social Council Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, under the chairmanship of South Africa. In the same vein, the Working Group also established a relationship and coordinated efforts with the newly established Economic and Social Council Advisory Group on Burundi, chaired by South Africa.

Accordingly, the Ad Hoc Working Group held two joint meetings with the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau and the group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau (chaired by the Gambia), prior to two Security Council meetings held on Guinea-Bissau. David Stephen, Representative of the Secretary-General and Chief of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau, and Alberic Kacou, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Guinea-Bissau, participated in those meetings.

The Ad Hoc Working Group's consistent position on the question of Guinea-Bissau was the need for that country to restore constitutional order through the organization of legislative elections and the need at the same time for the international community to take urgent steps to invest in the electoral process in Guinea-Bissau.

This position was a reaffirmation of the Economic and Social Council-endorsed partnership approach, as set out by its Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, on the basis of which the international community was expected to provide emergency assistance to the country, and in return the authorities would take measures to promote the rule of law and ensure political stability.

The Permanent Representative of Angola, in his capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group, or his designated representative, participated in meetings and videoconferences with representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions organized by the Economic and Social Council Advisory Group;

Under the Angolan presidency of the Security Council for November, the Ad Hoc Working Group was instrumental in the convening of a private meeting of the Council on Guinea-Bissau on 18 November 2003. An important delegation led by the President of Guinea-Bissau, Henrique Pereira Rosa, addressed the Council as João Bernardo de Miranda, Minister for External Relations of Angola, presided.

The above-mentioned efforts of the Ad Hoc Working Group found expression in the following statement by the Secretary-General in his recent report on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Peace-

building Support Office "I am encouraged by the work undertaken by the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa of the Security Council, the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau of the Economic and Social Council and the group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau" (S/2003/1157, para. 30).

The Ad Hoc Working Group has consistently advocated that current experiences in cooperation in the case of Guinea-Bissau between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council should be extended to other post-conflict situations. In this connection, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group was invited by the President of the Economic and Social Council to participate in a mission to Burundi from 18 to 25 November 2003. The Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group designated a representative to take part in the mission.

Security Council missions to Africa

In accordance with the Ad Hoc Working Group's proposals for regular interaction between the Security Council and countries and subregions of Africa, aimed at exploring approaches to finding durable solutions to conflict situations, as well as promoting peace-building and addressing the post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation needs of those countries and regions, the Ad Hoc Working Group contributed to the decisions of the Security Council to undertake missions and was actively involved in the preparations for the Security Council mission undertaken during the period under review to the Central African region, in June 2003, as well as the joint mission of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council to Guinea-Bissau from 26 to 28 June 2003.

Conflict prevention and resolution

The agenda of the Ad Hoc Working Group for the period under review continued to stress the need for the Security Council and the wider international community to give further impetus to the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by enhancing the role of the United Nations and encouraging the parties to comply with their commitments.

In that regard, the Ad Hoc Working Group held a meeting in April 2003 to consider the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The meeting stressed the need for a firm and constant commitment of the Security Council to prevent the events in the Ituri region from having an adverse impact on the progress already made in the peace process. The meeting also observed that the international community could also play an enhanced and constructive role through the follow-up Committee of the Sun City Agreement. The Council should therefore be prepared, if the need arises, to assist the follow-up Committee, composed of the resident ambassadors to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and representatives of the permanent members of the Council, as well as those of Angola, Zambia, South Africa, Mozambique, Canada and Belgium.

On 30 May 2003, under the Pakistani presidency, the Security Council held a wrap-up meeting on the subject "Conflicts in Africa: Security Council missions and United Nations mechanisms to promote peace and security". The Permanent Representative of Angola addressed the meeting in his capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group. Speaking on behalf of the Group, he underscored that the ad hoc working groups, if properly used, could be important tools in promoting peace and addressing the crises that afflict the African continent. This could be

made possible only if the work of the working groups were further enhanced by rendering their recommendations more pertinent to the work of the Security Council. He further indicated that working groups should consider establishing mechanisms for cooperation and coordination with sanctions committees, because experiences in Angola had shown that the imposition of sanctions had been an important tool in guaranteeing compliance with internationally accepted norms and resolving conflicts. The working groups should also make their recommendations more action-friendly for the United Nations system. Their effectiveness would depend on their capacity to focus on concrete situations, mobilize international support and provide advice and support for a timely response.

As reflected in the timetable for action, the matter of an international conference on peace, security, democracy and development in the African Great Lakes region was given due attention by the Security Council through the convening, on 20 November 2003, of a public briefing on the preparations for the international conference. Following that public meeting, the Ad Hoc Working Group convened a meeting with a cross-section of representatives of non-members of the Security Council. The participants had an interactive debate with Ibrahima Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region and Keli Walubita, Special Envoy of the African Union Commission for the same region. Final remarks were made by Francisco Madeira, Minister of the Presidency for Parliamentary and Diplomatic Issues of Mozambique, representing the Presidency of the African Union.

The meeting was aimed at exchanging views and seeking clarification on various aspects of the preparatory processes for the conference, as well as mobilizing the international community for assistance for the conference. There was broad agreement that the assistance of the international community was pivotal for the overall success of the conference.

Cooperation between the United Nations and African Union and subregional organizations

In conformity with its mandate, the Ad Hoc Working Group undertook actions to enhance cooperation in conflict prevention and resolution between the United Nations and the African Union and subregional organizations.

In that connection, the Permanent Observer Mission of the African Union in New York was consulted on and participated in the meetings of the Group. The chairmanship undertook contacts in February with the Political Department of the African Union Commission and the Central Organ of the African Union Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, in Addis Ababa.

During those contacts, the chairmanship held meetings with Sam Ibok, African Union Director for Peace and Security, and Ki-Doulaye, acting Head of the African Union Conflict Management Centre. Both expressed the readiness of the African Union to work closely with the Group and the Security Council on all African issues. The indicative work programme on peace and security issues in Africa established for the Central Organ and the Commission of the African Union for the period 2002-2003 was circulated among the members of the Group.

With respect to the Ad Hoc Working Group's interaction with subregional organizations, the Group intends to organize a Security Council meeting on the importance of the cooperation between the United Nations and existing peace and security mechanisms of African subregional organization, with a view to developing integrated approaches to conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building. The Group also intends to give greater attention to the issue of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement, which remains pending as part of the Group's timetable for action.